

Child and Family Services Update

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To Make Your Life Easier...Using SAFE Optimally

By Robert Lewis/Lori Jones/Kim Pinnegar

Shelter Placements And Opening/Closing Cases

We have had a lot of requests lately at the SAFE Help Desk to correct the placement history in foster care cases where children were removed during a CPS investigation. This is because placement closure dates have been entered in the CPS case while the children are still in placement, and then the CPS case closed before the follow-up SCF case was created. When placements are closed in a CPS cases (but the child wasn't really sent home) and when a CPS case with a removal is closed before there is an SCF case to assume responsibility for the child, numerous problems are created:

- An erroneous placement history record is created, which says that the children were returned home when in fact they weren't.
- Child and Family Services may have liability because a period of time exists when we have responsibility for a child who is out-of-home, but the record does not exist. If a child is out-of-home and in State custody, there must always be an open case in SAFE with the responsible worker and child location identified.
- The SCF worker or their senior assistant cannot begin to work the case in SAFE until fixes are made, causing delays and "unnecessary" extra work.
- The SAFE Help Desk has to make these changes and there may be at least a 24-hour delay before the placement can be updated in the region.

SAFE was designed to support and document a continuity of supervision of children who are out-of-home and in State custody. This works wonderfully if follow-up SCF cases are created BEFORE the closure (or during the closure wizard) of the CPS case that documents the removal. Ideally, the SCF cases should be created as soon as a foster care/family worker becomes involved and immediately after the Shelter hearing in which temporary custody was given to the State. Creating the SCF case in SAFE at this time smoothly and automatically moves all of the information regarding the removal and placement and the responsibility for supervision of the child in placement away from the CPS case to the SCF case and worker. Doing the changeover this way benefits everyone.

Thanks for listening.